

## **Blue Ribbon Commission on Education- Turtle Lake, May 21st**

### **Terry Nichols- Background**

- Navy Vietnam veteran, served in a Navy fighter squadron, deployed on Navy aircraft carrier in the blue water navy in Viet Nam. (69-70)
- Residence in the Town of Colfax, Dunn Co.
- Currently have three generations living in my home, myself, son and daughter-in-law, and two grandkids. Wife is in the Colfax Health and Rehab Center in Colfax. At one point I had four generations under my roof until my wife's father passed away in 2010 at 97 years old.
- Retired UW systems employee (UW Stout)- 2014
- Job responsibilities at University- Telecommunications and networking- infrastructure, Dept. of Telecommunications and Networking.

### **Educational background-**

- Tech school graduate- LaCrosse, Wi. formerly Western Wisconsin Technical Institute. (After leaving Navy)
- Baccalaureate degree- Career and Technical Education and Training
- Master's degree- Career and Technical Education, emphasis in administration
- Chair- Town of Colfax Plan Commission 2003-2018
- Member of West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.(WCWRPC)
- Concern- Broadband in rural areas of Wisconsin, the digital divide.
- Served on School District of Colfax steering committee passed referendum (2016) 7.2 million

### **Comments/concerns-**

Demographics:

10,000 U.S. citizens turn 65 every day and will for the next 17 years (Social Security Admin) Wisconsin not immune.

Greatly concerned about power partisan politics in Madison.

Too much; “bill passed along party lines”

At the local level, tech districts boards are appointed, not elected, totally taxation without representation at the local government level. School boards are elected, Dunn County Board of Supervisors are elected.

Antiquated funding statutes of the TC system date back before the end of the Viet Nam War. The Tech College system is the “sacred cow” of public higher education in Wisconsin. The Internet didn’t exist, online learning and distance learning didn’t exist, yet the ability of 16 local appointed tech district boards to borrow millions of dollars every budget cycle with the local property taxpayers in these districts getting the tab has thrown seniors and others, living on fixed incomes, under the bus. There is no correlation between property valuation and the ability to pay. (See demographics listed earlier)

This month started my sixteenth year of stating the following truth-

**“The pursuit of all public higher education in Wisconsin is completely an individual choice.”**

**Local property taxes is the common thread between K-12 Education and the Wisconsin Tech College System.**

Current tidal wave of school district referenda (66 last month across the state) and antiquated funding statutes of TCS is a “double whammy” for local property taxpayers. This situation at the local level is completely mean-spirited when it comes to seniors and others living on fixed incomes like myself.